

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VISIT OF UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TITLE XII TEAM -
UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
ALAFUA CAMPUS

1. AT THE END OF THEIR FOUR WEEK TOUR IN THE AREA THE
AID TEAM COMPOSED OF DR. FREDERICK K.T. TOM, DEAN OF
THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, UH; DR. PETER P. O'REILLY,
RESEARCH COORDINATOR FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT,
UH; AND DR. PETER P. TORAR, PROFESSOR OF AGRONOMY AND
CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF AGRONOMY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE,
RETURNED TO SUVA FOR THE PURPOSE OF SHARING WITH THE
EMBASSY THEIR IMPRESSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS AND TO HOLD A
SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC
(USP) TO TEST THE UNIVERSITY'S RECEPTIVITY AND REACTIONS
TO SOME OF THEIR CONCLUSIONS.

2. WE FOUND TEAM'S BRIEFING QUITE IMPRESSIVE FOR THE
FOLLOWING REASONS:
(A) IT REVEALED A PAINSTAKING ANALYSIS OF THE RELEVANT
FACTORS WHICH CAN DETERMINE THE MEANINGFULNESS OF THE
PROJECT AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AID ASSISTANCE.
ABOVE ALL THIS INCLUDES WELL THOUGHT OUT PROJECTIONS
OF THE NEEDS OF THE AGRICULTURE COLLEGE IN ALAFUA IN
ORDER TO MEET WTHE CHALLENGES OF THE AREA IN TERMS OF
NUMBER OF GRADUATES NEEDED AND GROWING IMPORTANCE OF
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 SUVA 00663 240111Z

EXTENSION PROGRAMS.

(B) IN TERMS OF CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION STANDARDS,
THE TEAM HAS TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT THE ENVIRONMENT
IN WHICH THESE GRADUATES WILL BE APPLYING THEIR KNOWLEDGE
AND SOUGHT TO MINIMIZE THE RISKS OF OVER-QUALIFICATION.

(C) THE TEAM WAS GUIDED TO A REMARKABLE DEGREE BY
THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE REGIONAL DIMINIONS OF THE PROJECT

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF INPUT AND OUTPUT OF THE COLLEGE. THIS WAS ILLUSTRATED BY THE TEAM'S APPROACH TO RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED UNDER THE COLLEGE AUSPICES BY PROVIDING FOR SEPARATE RESEARCH CENTERS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN EACH OF THE 11 COUNTRIES CONSTITUTING THE USP REGION.

(C) THE TEAM HAS DONE AN EQUALLY COMMENDABLE WORK IN ASSESSING THE RELEVANT AID PROVIDED BY OTHER DONORS AND IN INTEGRATING SUCH AID INTO THEIR OWN SCHEME FOR THE PROJECT.

(E) THE TEAM'S KEEN SENSE OF OBSERVATION LED TO THE IMPORTANT DISCOVERY THAT MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION IN THE AREA HAVE EQUAL AND IN SOME CASES EVEN GREATER INTEREST IN THE OPERATION AND MISSION OF THE AGRICULTURE COLLEGE THAN MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE. THE REASON FOR THIS LIES IN THE FACT THAT GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION ENGAGED IN IT, THE EDUCATION MINISTRIES HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT THE TRADITIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IS THE BEST VEHICLE FOR DISSEMINATING MODERN AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE. IN COUNTRY AFTER COUNTRY CONSISTENT EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO REVISE SECONDARY AND IN SOME INSTANCES EVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULAE TO EXPAND TIME DEVOTED TO INSTRUCTION IN AGRICULTURE.

2. PERHAPS THE MOST REMARKABLE POINT MADE BY THE TEAM WAS THE DISCOVERY OF THE CULTURAL OR ETHNOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS
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PAGE 03 SUVA 00663 240111Z

OF AGRICULTURE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS. THE ENTIRE CULTURAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ISLANDS ON WHICH TRADITIONS AND POPULATION COHESIVENESS REST IS FOUND IN THE CULTIVATION OF LAND. ACCORDINGLY, THE TEAM MODELED THE PROJECT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO HIGHLIGHT THE ALAFUA CAMPUS ROLE IN A GRADUAL CULTURAL EVOLUTION OF THE AREA AND IN RAISING STANDARDS OF LIVING WITHOUT UNDERMINING TRADITIONAL SOCIAL VALUES.

3. IN OTHER WORDS THIS WILL SERVE TO ALERT THE DEPARTMENT THAT THE TEAM'S REPORT IS LIKELY TO BE A SIGNIFICANT PIECE OF INVESTIGATION AND REFLECTION, THAT IT WILL BE WORTHY OF CAREFUL REVIEW AND HOPEFULLY WILL GENERATE THE KIND OF ENTHUSIASM NEEDED TO CARRY OUT AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT. BASED ON THE TEAM'S BRIEFING WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE PROJECT TO EMERGE OUT OF ITS REPORT WILL ADDRESS THE AREA'S HIGHEST PRIORITIES IN A MOST MEANINGFUL WAY.
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